

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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CONTACT: Israel Klein

or Benn Tannenbaum

(202) 225-2836

78 HOUSE MEMBERS URGE REJECTION OF NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT BY U.S.

Markey Letter urges Armed Services Committee to cut funding for 'Bunker Busters'

WASHINGTON, DC- Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA) today released a letter, signed by 77 other House lawmakers, calling on House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) and Ranking Member Ike Skelton (D-MO) to reject President Bush's request for \$15.5 million in next year's defense budget to continue studies on a nuclear bunker buster weapon, also known as the "Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator."

"We've just fought a war in Iraq, ostensibly to curtail Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs. We are currently trying to dissuade North Korea and Iran from developing nuclear weapons of their own. What signal does it send to the rest of the world if at the same time we are proceeding with plans to build a whole new generation of nuclear weapons?" Rep. Markey explained.

Markey added, "There are serious questions about whether a nuclear bunker buster could ever work as advertised and whether there is any real military requirement for such a weapon. We know that, our own military currently is trying to move away from nuclear weapons and would rather have new, more powerful, more accurate conventional weapons."

Advocates of the nuclear bunker buster propose this new nuclear weapon as a way to destroy hardened and deeply buried targets and destroy chemical and biological weapons stockpiles. However, the physical reality is quite different: experiments have shown Los Alamos National Laboratory that nothing can tunnel more than 4-5 times its length, or roughly 40-50 feet for a typical bomb. At that depth, there is a limit to how deep or hardened a target that can be destroyed. Further, a nuclear explosion at that depth would not be contained, and even a small, 1-kiloton nuclear bomb would hurl one million cubic feet of radioactive dirt and rock into the air and onto the surrounding countryside. Additionally, the intense heat required to destroy chemical and biological weapons would only be generated in a small volume; instead, the force of the explosion would mix the chemical or biological weapons with the radioactive dirt and spread it over tens or hundreds of square kilometers.

Rep. Markey concluded, "As the head of U.S. Strategic Command Adm. James Ellis said in the May 4 *Washington Post*, the military is moving away from nuclear weapons and towards conventional ones. Let's give the military what it wants: let's spend the money on conventional bunker busters and on nonproliferation efforts. Instead of engaging in the proliferation of our own nuclear weapons, let's set a nonproliferation example for the rest of the world."

The following Representatives joined Rep. Markey in signing the letter: Allen (D-ME), Hinchey (D-NY), Rush (D-IL), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Moore (D-KS), Holt (D-NJ), Engel (D-NY), Olver (D-MA), Conyers (D-MI), DeFazio (D-OR), Baldwin (D-WI), McGovern (D-MA), Sanders (I-VT), Blumenauer (D-OR), Acevedo-Vila (D-PR), Evans (D-IL), Grijalva (D-AZ), Honda (D-CA), Doggett (D-TX), Fattah (D-PA), Filner (D-CA), Hoeffel (D-PA), Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), Woolsey (D-CA), Frank (D-MA), Sabo (D-MN), McDermott (D-WA), Delahunt (D-MA), Mark Udall (D-CO), Farr (D-CA), Baird (D-WA), Schakowsky (D-IL), Waters (D-CA), Waxman (D-CA), Capps (D-CA), Capuano (D-MA), George Miller (D-CA), Towns (D-NY), Corrine Brown (D-FL), Mike Thompson (D-CA), Norton (D-DC), Stark (D-CA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Kucinich (D-OH), Tom Udall (D-NM), Tierney (D-MA), Nadler (D-NY), Linda Sanchez (D-CA), Watson (D-CA), Susan Davis (D-CA), Oberstar (D-MN), Maloney (D-NY), Matheson (D-UT), Solis (D-CA), Kilpatrick (D-MI), John Lewis (D-GA), Slaughter (D-NY), Eshoo (D-CA), Tim Ryan (D-OH), Neal (D-MA), Jim Moran (D-VA), Dicks (D-WA), David Price (D-NC), Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), McCollum (D-MN), Lofgren (D-CA), Payne (D-NJ), Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), Lynch (D-MA), Cooper (D-TN), Adam Smith (D-WA), Berman (D-CA), Meehan (D-MA), Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL), Owens (D-NY), DeGette (D-CO), Berkley (D-NV)

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